DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 023 CE 000 318

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TITLE	Future Functional Roles of the Commission of Professors of Adult Education as a Professional Group. Panel Discussion at the Annual Meeting of the Commission (Dallas, Texas, October 30, 1973).
INSTITUTION	Commission of Professors of Adult Education.
PUB DATE	30 Oct 73
NOTE	39p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; Adult Educators; *Conferences; Discussion Programs; *Professors
IDENTIFIERS	*Commission of Professors of Adult Education

ABSTRACT

Three discussants explored the possibilities and implications of future roles of their organization. William D. Dowling cited criteria of professionalism and their application to adult education professors. Charles E. Kozell discussed constraints on strengthening the association and then outlined eight recommendations which might be implemented through task forces or committees. William S. Griffith reviewed the professional status of adult education and cited some advantages and disadvantages of such status. The implications of the Commission's relationship to the Adult Education Association were described. Some functions he suggested were the establishment of a professional journal, a larger role in research, and a basic text. (MS)

ED 082023

Presentation: Commission of Professors of Adult Education
Tuesday, October 30, 1973
Hotel Adolphus Dallas, Texas

William D. Dowling, Ohio State University

Topic: Future Future Functional Roles of the Commission of Professors of Adult Education as a Professional Group

I. How does the profession become so designated?

Let us begin with a definition of the term "profession". Webster defines it as "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as in the scientific, historical, or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods, maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing its members to continued study and to a kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of a public service."

A profession is so designated when, "a number of persons are found to be practicing a definite technique founded upon a specialized training."[1]

There may be two ways that a group becomes recognized as a profession. One is for its public to recognize that a professional group exists and proclaims them to be such. The other method is for members of the group providing a valuable public service to recognize their characteristics as a profession and proclaim themselves to be a professional

1. A. M. Carr Saunders, Professions and Their Organization and ce in Society, Clarendon Press, 1928.

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group.

It is doubtful that the being a professor of Adult Education will be accorded professional status by its public because the public it serves is so diffused that it does not always recognize that it is being served by members of a specific group. It will probably be necessary for professors of Adult Education and/or other adult educators to proclaim their professionalism and specify the nature of their characteristics and qualifications that set them apart from others of perhaps similiar, but less specific professional experience and/or training.

The "Pyramid of Professional Leadership" in Adult Education as devised by Cyril Houle is helpful at this point. He delineated three types of persons involved as adult educators. They are the para-professionals who constitute the largest group, the part-time or semi-professionals and finally the smallest group, at the apex of the pyramid, the full-time employees in adult education. The problem of inclusiveness or exclusiveness, considering these three categories of leadership is one of which we must be constantly aware as we consider the implications of a more careful delineation of professionalism in Adult Education.

James Farmer's dissertation dealt with the professionalization of administration in higher adult education. He cited a meeting held in 1957 in Chicago on this topic. At that time, Howard McClusky believed this field was not yet of professional status, but was moving toward it

James T. Carey believes that "the conditions for potential change might well be the establishment of a firm sense of profession among the

administrative staffs of university adult units, a condition which seems somewhat mirage like --- Recent signs of at least the beginnings of a development of professionalization in the field (were observed and viewed favorably."

Farmer also cited Wilensky, Caplow and others who described the sequence of stages of professionalization as: 1. creation of a full time occupation; 2. establishing a professional association; 3. change of name; 4. the development and promulgation of a code of ethics; 5. a prolonged political agitation to obtain the support of the public power for the maintenance of the new occupational barriers; 6. the development of training facilities directly or indirectly controlled by the professional society.

Educators of adults have been moving toward professionalization through the years. While interest in it may be sporadic and seasoned veterans have a feeling of paramnesia, this may be the time for all good educators of adults to come to the aid of an emergent profession and make progress toward the goal.

II. What are some of the factors which have motivated members of service groups to desire and develop professional status?

First of all, members of a profession have a common interest in a subject matter. Secondly, the better equipped among the practitioners of a certain public service come to realize the specificity of their service and the uniqueness of that which they provide for the public. The

public, however, does not give to the more qualified members of the emerging profession exclusive right to a title or recognition to the point of the development of a professional association. In other words, the poorly equipped in the early days of a profession have the same rights to title and public recognition as those who are more adequately equipped to perform the service. The interest in development of a profession then follows in part from the desire of highly qualified members of a group to set themselves apart from the less equipped members who may provide the same or similiar service. A third motivating factor for the development of a profession is to assure that all practitioners should attain at least minimum qualifications to provide the service for the public. This is the point at which the issue of inclusiveness and exclusiveness rears its ugly head. It may be that adult educators or professors of adult education have not yet come to the point of being able to say that there is something unique about that which they provide for the public. A fourth purpose which emerges during the development of a professional association is that it can define and enforce regulations concerning the conduct of a professional as defined by the group. A fifth motive leading to the formation of professional associations can be to raise the status of the members of the group. This has probably been a motive in the general field of adult education through the years. Status and level of remuneration for members of a profession are closely related and many organizers hope that proclamation of professional status will enhance the view the public has of the

particular group. A final hoped-for activity of professional groups or associations is that they might become engaged in public activities which could be seen as enhancing the status of the profession in that the members of the profession and they alone are qualified and empowered to speak about the matters of which they are expert to the public. They give advice, counsel and possibly affect legislation regulating or affecting the practice of the service they are qualified to provide.

III. What would a more careful professional designation accomplish for the professors of Adult Education?

Dr. Abraham Flexner assisted the social work profession in 1915 by suggesting six criteria which might set apart the members of that profession. They are: "professions involve essentially intellectual operations with large individual responsibility; they derive their raw materials from science and learning; this material they work up to a practical and definite end; they possess an educationally communicable technique; they tend to self-organization; and they are becoming increasingly altruistic in motivation."

Let us examine these criteria to determine first of all the degree to which the professors of Adult Education measure up to the criteria and secondly what it might mean if the members of the group were to meet or surpass some of these criteria.

To what degree are the tasks of the professors of Adult Education intellectual and to what degree do they involve individual responsibility?

In my view, being a professor of Adult Education qualifies as a profession because the work is entirely intellectual. Also while much of the work of the professor in Adult Education is personal and individual, few of us respond to need outside the framework of an institution or a team of colleagues who have similiar intellectual preparation and sense of responsibility.

The second criterion involves what might be called the "learned" aspect of professional life. As professors of Adult Education, we can respond in a positive manner to this criterion to the degree which we are engaged in the derivation of new knowledge in laboratory, seminar or through individual research. We are acting professionally to the degree we are responsible for generating a steady stream of ideas which are fed to others in the field and have implications for the practice of the public service.

Is the intellectual and learned material provided for a practical purpose? If as University professors we are engaged in the preparation of persons who will devote their energies toward the development of increassingly effective learning experiences for adults, we meet this criterion.

To what degree do professors of Adult Education possess an "educationally communicable technique" ? Are we fairly well agreed about the objectives which the profession should seek to fulfill? Is there a significant degree of agreement among us about the skills which a practitioner of our profession should possess? Have we statements of beliefs

in common about how those capable persons who come to us for instruction should be instructed to get the fullest possible benefits from the training and also to provide the fullest benefit to the public which they will most likely serve? It is my belief this is an area which the professors of Adult Education might strengthen. It is a criterion to which we have not yet given a great deal of consideration.

In my opinion, the professors of Adult Education have tended to meet the fifth criterion of Dr. Flexner. We have tended to organize ourselves for the purpose of pursuing our common interests. It is perhaps to our credit that we have not been terribly exclusive. On the other hand there is a is a possiblility that a closer deliniation of what it means to be a member of this group and a member of this profession might make for a greater degree of exclusivity. Internally, we may provide a democratic environment for the making of decisions while appearing externally as a somewhat aristocratic organization. As long as we allow membership in the group to be conditioned by the nature of the responsibility the individual bears, we may be viewed as democratic in essence and in fact.

The final criterion of Dr. Flexner is that professional groups have become increasingly altruistic in motivation. Considering that Dr. Flexner developed these thoughts in 1915, we may wish to consider that has happened in nearly sixty years to the altruism of professions. It seems to me that while many professions have not become less exclusive or more inclusive, at least their stated purposes are becoming more clearly in line with common social interest. In my view, the professors

of Adult Education as an organization are extremely altruistic in nature. Our altruism may not have been stated rhetorically as often as other professions have proclaimed theirs. The nature of education as a field of endeavor would seem to preclude in large measure the development of Adult Education for other than altruistic reasons.

IV. What implications and questions are raised by these criteria for the professors of Adult Education and perhaps for all practitioners in the field?

We need to consider at an early moment whether our designation as a profession would enhance or harm our provision of service to the public we serve. I would suggest that we should make such decisions based not on our personal attitudes and philosophies of what constitutes a democratic orgaization but rather what kind of organization can assist us as individuals in becoming increasingly helpful to the people we would serve.

I therefore urge that the professors of adult education assume immediate leadership to the end that the field of Adult Education and more specifically the professors of Adult Education be delineated as a professional group.

This means that we shall have to very carefully examine ourselves individually and as a group in line with the model outlined by Dr. Flexner or others, if other models can be found which are more appropriate, and that we begin to govern ourselves individually and as a group so that the impact of Adult Education may be felt more fully throughout our society and the world.

Some of the specific things we will need to accomplish are:

1) we must individually and as a group continue to make increasing contributions to the body of knowledge which constitutes our field. This means writing books, seeing that books are written and aiding in the dissemination of knowledge, wherever it is developed within our field:

2) Without achieving the ugliness of standardization, we must as professors of Adult Education begin a process which will allow graduate programs in various institutions to develop some commonalities which will have the effect of beginning a standardization process for the field. This will become more important as an increasing number of universities begin to offer graduate work in our field. Hardly a week passes that most of us do not receive a request for information about our graduate programs from colleges and universities beginning Adult Education graduate programs. A professional organization would have such information available at a central place. We must recognize the need for individuality which will help us grow as a profession but if we are to be recognized as a profession we must have some similitarities in graduate programs from university to university. The graduate of an Adult Education program in the Southeast should be able to perform similiar functions to a person receiving his graduate work in the northwest part of the country.

We must also begin to function more as a brotherhood of persons who have altruistic purposes. I believe there was a good measure of

altruism involved in the creation of the ad hoc committee to provide material for the justification of graduate programs in Adult Education. While it is true that our group was energized by the threat to the graduate programs at Boston University, it was our hope, I believe, that the graduate program be continued at that site, not for the personal gain of the professors but for the continuation of a valuable service to the people of that area, to the nation and to the world. It is these kinds of considerations which I would recommend be continually in our thinking as we continue to develop our feelingsof professionalism in the field of Adult Education.

I recognize that these concerns can not be met overnight and that it may take several years for use to be fully functional, fully recognized members of a profession.

I believe that the benefits to those of us inside the field will be as important as to those outside the field and those whom we serve. I do not believe the benefit will be for us as individuals, it will not mean an increase in monetary gain but it will mean greater opportunities to serve those whom the field of Adult Education is designed to serve.

The task ahead seems to me to be very great, but also perhaps as meaningful as any activities in which we have engaged in the past.

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The following is a summary of remarks to be made on October 30 at the Commission of Professor's panel discussion concerning:

Future Functional Roles Of The Commission of Professors Of Adult Education As A Professional Group

The remarks are divided in half, part one constraints and part two, recommendations.

CONSTRAINTS

There is a certain fever which enthuses people at a convention. This is especially true as a once a year opportunity to see colleagues from different places. Removed from the reality setting of daily responsibility, individuals sometimes make commitments which are regretted on colder and lighter mornings. This group must take some directed steps forward to increase the visibility, strength and relevance of its association. But the kinds of steps to be taken should be toward solid ground rather than into areas where projects and good intentions have to be abandoned.

All should be mindful and cognizant of what the following constraints do to our ability to act.

1. The time to do what we hope will be accomplished may not always be available or available to be made. Nothing will pour more water on an enthusiastic colleague than an associate who volunteers and then withdraws because there simply aren't hours in the day to honor responsibilities.

2. Institutional obligations must take precedence. After all, a college or university pays salaries and sets the guidelines for promotion, and all other tangible benefits. While external professional activities are normally allowed and encouraged, they still must take a backseat to what should be done at home, in the classroom or through personal research/ service, first.

3. Distance reduces the urgency of any commitment to action. When it is necessary to draft a letter or make a phone call or operate by some other means of long way communication, movement becomes harder and tasks take longer. It becomes easier to put off until . . . .

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4. Agreement is normally difficult with any group of more than two human beings. There are all kinds of jokes around about getting different nationalities to agree and, probably the most cynical, concern trying to get a group of educators united over some cause, other than tenure and salary. The few past experiences with meetings of this group point out how easy it is for remarks and negative opinions to be cast but how difficult unanimous consent is. Commitment to decisive action may even be harder, unless there is an immediate threat, i.e. ERIC closing.

5. Assumption of responsibility is hindered by points 1-3 of the above. When it becomes as nebulous as the task of forward movement for a professional association, with limitations on immediate personal gain, the number of individuals willing to join in may diminish. Hopefully, this last point will be proven entirely wrong.

6. Scope refers to tackling a subject or a task which is broad enough to have some meaning, but limited enough to assure completion. Something that will have a demonstrated end and effect will do a great deal for stimulating further effort by this group. For all of its limitations, that now famous black book may have been such an item. Something else that significant and involving may be needed, rather than simply a study or series position papers.

7. Impact frustration are two words combined for want of more precise terms. What it means is that some task may be undertaken and completed, but its net result may be far less than expected. The first time trial, then would reduce the willingness to get involved in other activities.

To be sure, none of these constraints are insurmountable. These are offered as a realistic prelude to establishing recommendations which could be implemented by the group acting in as unified a fashion as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The "how" of these are not spelled out exactly. Task forces or committee structures are one method. Individual action another. Deadlines and end products must be spelled out clearly, before any action is started.

1. STRONG POSITION PAPER. This is something mentioned last year. Hopefully it is in the works now and will present a solid case for the multiple benefits derived from adult education programs at colleges and universities. This should be a short but dynamic document which will clearly spell out what has, is being and should be contributed by various

professional programs. Figures and statistics included should ring bells among academic leadership. It should be updated every few years and given wide circulation, perhaps published in several places by widely respected authors.

2. INPUT INTO HIGHER EDUCATION TRAINING GROUPS. With a position paper and perhaps other documents that may rise from the preparation exercise, it would be possible and desirable for the commission to make contact with higher educational planning groups and authorities around the country. In many states, they are the body which does the long range thinking for educational systems. Some have individuals responsible for service or continuing education functions and they should be made cognizant of the commission as a viable body and of the varied roles which adult education can perform. If the commission is serious about collection of data, they could become a valuable source for the kinds of planning activities in which all of these bodies are currently involved.

3. STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATION. If adult education departments are going to be dismembered or eliminated, it would seem to me more logical to have some notions of how to be dismantled. Thus it would be desirable to think what related departments and colleges would provide a suitable home for the kinds of adult education programs which are current or should be developed. Included within strategies for integration would be how to effect the liason with these academic colleagues and what kinds of integrity to maintain, in less than desirable circumstances.

4. CATEGORIZATION OF DIRECTION. This data is available, but should be spread further. This could be an addenum to a position paper, in the sense that it would characterize the kinds of activities that graduates in adult education undertake. In Georgia experience there has been little difficulty in placing individuals with M.A. or doctoral degrees, and, given the plight of so many education graduates, this information will gladden the heart of many academic leaders.

5. PLANNED RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION PROGRAM. This may have been discussed. There are committees for both research and publication. It seems to me that some superficial research was done on the kinds of publications needed and last year, someone stood up and talked about the need for seminal works. This is navel scratching. What is desperately needed is a planned research and publication program which includes distribution of assignments, decisions on items to be written, negotiations which publishers and publicity among potential users. We should know which professors are capable or writing what and who will do the job. This potential area demands dynamic, forceful and somewhat autocratic leadership. If nothing is done in this area,

there will be annual opportunities for senior leaderhsip to stand up and berate colleagues about the pitiful nature of adult education texts.

6. COORDINATION OF COURSE OFFERINGS. This moves somewhat in the direction of setting professional standards and could bring the commission into contact with the regional accrediting associations. It is an opportune time for such dialogue, since there is more willingness to discuss off-campus non tradtional and extended educational opportunities. If we are less dogmatic about the strictly academic nature of courses and can establish some nationwide discussion of what is basically included in adult education program curriculum, there is another coordinated input to academic institutions, higher education planning authorities and accrediting groups. It extended visibility and gives an indicatcn of dynamism in an area where there is far too much ignorance.

7. CONSIDER OTHER PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS. My own inclination is toward management development and training groups, such as ASTD. Within that group, there are people who steal from adult education. Personnel associations are crying out for assistance with basic information on how to work with adults. Many of you probably know other professional organizations with whom affiliation would be logical. I urge that this become an area of investigation.

8. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN. This is done partially through the newsletter, but definite additional effort should be made, especially with regional staff development programs, to write the deans of colleges of education around the country where there is some participation and urge part and full time professors of adult education to join. In the Southeast, for example, there are at least a dozen predominantly black institutions that have very active programs in adult education and it isn't clear any one of them has ever been informed about the Commission and the benefits to be derived. There is still some reluctance to join; personal contact from influential figures should be made. We have something to offer them and I am very sure that they have insights and knowledge to share with us.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONAL ROLES OF THE COMMISSION OF THE PROFESSORS OF ADULT EDUCATION AS A PROFESSIONAL GROUP[1]

William S. Griffith
The University of Chicago

[1]Panel presentation at the annual meeting of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education, Dallas, Texas, Tuesday, October 30, 1973.

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Introduction

When the chairman of this session telephoned me months ago to invite me to serve on this panel, he instructed me to be provocative and direct in what I have to say. In preparing for this assignment, I have reviewed the professional status of adult education, the characteristics of adult education leaders, the initial statement of the objectives of the Commission, the meanings of the word profession, and the advantages and disadvantages of professional status. With this background from our literature, I then reviewed my experience over the past decade as a member of the Commission and of AEA and considered the implications to be drawn from these sources in considering future functional roles of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education as a professional group. Today I plan to share this thinking with you and to invite you to criticize and extend the arguments which I shall present.

Professional Status of Adult Education

Eighteen years ago McClusky spoke at the annual conference of the AEA in St. Louis and was reported as having said that adult education was "not yet" a profession for the following four reasons:

(1) There are not enough positions clearly defined by the occupant and his public.
(2) There are not enough standards by which to judge the performance of the adult education worker.
(3) There is not a well enough defined body of knowledge about adult education.
(4) There are not enough career opportunities in the field.[1]

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[1] Howard S. Becker, "Some Problems of Professionalism," in Adult Education, VI (Winter, 1956), p. 101.

A decade ago Liveright examined the professional status of the occupational category, adult educator. Drawing upon the literature of the field and his own experience, he listed eight characteristics of adult education leaders which he believed support the conclusion that adult education is not yet a profession:

> (1) Few of them have participated in an organized program of graduate study in adult education or hold advanced degrees therein.
> (2) Most come from other occupations and have moved into adult education after other kinds of employment.
> (3) Many look upon adult education as a stepping stone rather than as a permanent career.
> (4) During the past ten years, many have moved from adult education to other posts in the educational or community field - many to other administrative posts in education.
> (5) Their conceptions of the ideal adult educator and of the competencies required for the professional adult educator vary widely.
> (6) Many of them are action oriented rather than research oriented, and few have made major research contributions to the field of adult education.
> (7) Many are concerned about their status and position as adult educators and do not as yet feel completely identified with the field, or, if they do, they feel themselves "second-rate" citizens in the academic hierarchy.
> (8) There is as yet no clearly defined set of values or code of ethics subscribed to by all of them.[1]

Within the AEA one group was emerging which exhibited a high degree of occupational homogeneity and which appears to have the greatest potential for developing into a professional society of all of the interest groups which comprise that association. I refer to the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., which was developed from the AEA Section on Training in 1956 to serve six purposes:

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[1]A. A. Liveright, "The Nature and Aims of Adult Education as a Field of Graduate Education," in Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study, edited by Gale Jensen, A. A. Liveright and Wilbur Hallenbeck ([Chicago:]) Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1964), pp. 93-94.

(1) to crystallize a definition of adult education as a field of work;
(2) to develop a systematic theory of graduate education for professional adult educators;
(3) to identify the elements that should be included in the content of a graduate curriculum for professional adult educators,
(4) to systematize existing knowledge and identify new knowledge required for adequate graduate education for adult education;
(5) to develop improved methods of graduate education for adult education; and
(6) to develop and test methods of evaluating results of graduate study.[1]

It may be instructive to reflect on these six purposes and to ask whether they constitute an adequate base for constructing a professional association.

Approaches to a Definition of a Profession

Becker has said that the word profession is simply a collective symbol by which a work group may be designated both by itself and by others. Using this approach, we would regard as a profession any group which is fortunate enough to get itself accepted as such. In this case the precise meaning of the term would be inferred from popular usage.[2] While this approach to definition has practical and political advantages, it seems a fickle and capricious way to recognize and designate a specialized field of study and practice.

Authors and speakers frequently use the word profession without defining exactly what the concept means to them. A dictionary definition such as "a vocation or occupation requiring advanced training in some liberal art or science, and usually involving mental rather than manual work" does not provide sufficient specificity to facilitate an examination of the degree to which an occupational category merits the designation of "profession." Allen sought to examine the growth of professionalism in the adult education movement and to accomplish this, he found it necessary to synthesize the following list of 15 criteria which he believed would characterize an ideal profession. A profession:

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[1] Burton W. Kreitlow, "The Commission of the Professors of Adult Education" in Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study, ed. by Gale E. Jensen, A. A. Liveright and Wilbur Hallenbeck (Chicago: Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1964), p. 328.

[2] Becker, loc. cit.

(1) serves a socially valuable and highly acceptable function which deals with matters of vital importance to the client;

(2) organizes its members into an association which tests competence, maintains standards, establishes training opportunities and thereby gains societal recognition and status for the profession,

(3) is based upon a complex systematic body of theoretical knowledge;

(4) possesses a technique which is used in carrying out its function, and which cannot be readily understood nor practiced by the general public;

(5) produces a code of ethics which protects the interests of the client, the general public and the professional practitioner and is enforced by the professional association;

(6) is composed of members who have gained expertise in the profession's body of knowledge and technique by means of long formal intellectual training in a college or university;

(7) exercises control over the quality of its members and their practice by means of entrance requirements and minimum standards of training, and, in return for obedience to these standards, offers colleague-group protection to the individual practitioner;

(8) in collaboration with state officials sets up legal control of certification or licensing;

(9) is composed of practitioners who are autonomous (self-directing) in their actions;

(10) performs its functions in such a manner that the interests of the clients and society are placed above and before the personal interests of the practitioner;

(11) is recognized by the general public and other professionals as an occupation of high status;

(12) is made up of people who are committed to the occupation as a career;

(13) tends to divide its functions into different specialties;

(14) is a full-time occupation which gives sufficient remuneration for the practitioner to maintain a livelihood;

(15) adopts a common, special language which can only be fully understood by the practitioner.[1]

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[1] Lawrence A. Allen, "The Growth of Professionalism in the Adult Education Movement, 1928-1958 "(abstract of unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1961)," pp. 3-4. (Mimeographed.)

Disadvantages and Advantages of Professional Status

As we look at this list of criteria, we might be moved to ask whether the disadvantages of becoming a profession do not outweigh the advantages. Of course we would not be the first persons to consider this issue for Brunner, Nicholls and Sieber made an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of professional status. They identified the following four disadvantages:

(1) Creation of highly visible and important prestige differences within the field may exclude and alienate many who could make valuable contributions.

(2) Standardization of training prior to the existence of a substantial body of knowledge may tend to stultify and ritualize the limited knowledge, rather than encourage the exploration of new knowledge.

(3) Difficulty of determining who is to be a member because founders come from other fields and lack specific training in the new profession. Including them provides a basis for others who seek admission to insist that training is not necessary.

(4) In the early stages of the new profession, the founders have lost their organizational and psychological ties to their former profession and yet do not have a clearly defined place and area of competence of their own in the emerging profession.[1]

Countering and presumably outweighing these four disadvantages are seven advantages associated with professional status:

(1) When a group of practitioners are regarded by the public and other occupational groups as holding specialized technical knowledge and as applying this knowledge ethically, the group is usually granted the prestige accorded professions generally.

(2) Prestige makes it easier to acquire funds for research.

(3) Prestige gives more weight to the pronouncements of the members of the occupation in areas considered within the competence of the profession.

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[1]Edmund deS. Brunner, William L. Nicholls, II and Sam Sieber, The Role of a National Organization in Adult Education (New York: Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1959), pp. 325-26.

(4) Prestige helps attract able recruits to the field.
(5) Professions set their own standards for training and certification and can raise them at will.
(6) External groups which are not familiar with the requirements of the profession are kept from interfering.
(7) By holding a monopoly of certified persons in the occupation, they can enforce their code of ethics both vis-a-vis those certified and vis-a-vis their employers or clients.[1]

Apparently the move to professionalism is generally regarded as a good thing. But now let us reflect on our Commission and some of the issues we would face were we to earnestly pursue professionalism.

Issues and Approaches

Our parent organization, the Adult Education Association of the United States, cannot be regarded as a professional organization because the only test of eligibility for membership is ability and willingness to pay dues. Even the membership category "professional" is little more than a means of collecting higher dues from a segment of the total membership that responds to an appeal to vanity or charity. Further, the congenital egalitarianism of the AEA seems to rule out the possibility of its developing a viable means of discriminating between amateurs and professionals. I believe that the AEA is not now, nor is it constitutionally capable of becoming, the professional association for the broad field of adult education.

The Commission of the Professors of Adult Education are not now and cannot reasonably be expected to become the association for all practicing full-time adult educators. This Commission are a society of college and university professors of adult education and their primary purpose is to advance the public welfare through research and teaching in college and university programs for preparing and upgrading practicing adult educators. If the Commission were to become an association with membership open to all full-time adult educators, the members' ability to advance teaching and research would suffer, crowded aside by the urgent practical concerns of administrators. If the Commission were to open their membership to all who had earned a degree in adult education, they would have to add numerous interest areas to those of teaching and research, thereby diverting them from the primary functions the Commission was established to serve.

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[1] Ibid., 324-25.

It is possibly true that there is a need for a national professional association whose members would all have had academic preparation in the field of adult education. Neither the AEA as a whole nor the Commission as one of its components is capable of developing into such an association, even if such a change were deemed desirable. If there is to come into being a profession known as adult education, then the need for a professional organization of the academically qualified which transcends institutional boundaries is indisputable. It most certainly will not be composed exclusively of college and university teachers of adult education. The development and existence of such a professional association at some future date would not eliminate the need for a society of professors of adult education. In fact, I believe that if teaching and research are to be given sustained attention in advancing adult education as a field of scholarship, then a society which is devoted exclusively to these functions is the best vehicle for achieving maximum progress.

In considering future functional roles for the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., we might think about how the Commission could change to meet a constant set of needs irrespective of the actions of any other organization. To plan for the future, we need to place primary emphasis on achieving those purposes which are uniquely ours. We can assume that other groups will be about as effective in advancing their interests as we will be with ours.

The Need for Autonomy

The Commission or society of Professors of Adult Education must establish their independence from all other organizations, including the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. So long as the Commission remain a subordinate part of a larger organization they cannot be independent. The governing body of the Association has the constitutional power to name our officers, reverse our decisions, and dissolve the Commission. We have no legal independent voice as an organization of professors. Whatever we might like to believe, when we speak we do so as a subordinate unit of AEA and as such we do not exert much influence on the decision makers in higher education or government. Accordingly, I suggest that we appoint a committee to begin planning for the establishment of an autonomous society of professors of adult education, some of whom will choose to maintain an intimate relationship with the AEA while others will choose to cultivate their relationships with NUEA, NASULGC, AUEC, NAPCAE, AACJC, AVA or other groups. Perhaps by their collective eighteenth birthday, the Commission may attain autonomous adult status.

The Commission of Professors of Adult Education are ostensibly very deeply committed to advancing our knowledge of the field. Some observers might question our degree of commitment to that goal for several reasons.

A Professional Journal for the Commission

The Commission do not have an official journal. While it is true that members of the Commission have played key roles in contributing articles and in the editing of journals such as Adult Education and the Journal of Extension, these functions have been performed by individuals acting in their capacity as individuals and not by virtue of their Commission membership. If Adult Education is to be a journal of research and theory, then it would seem appropriate that the Commission begin conversations with the AEA Board regarding amicable arrangements for transferring the management of the journal to the Commission.

An Enlarging Role in Adult Education Research

The Commission's interest in research is a matter of conjecture. For the last decade, an annual gathering of persons interested in reporting, discussing, and hearing discussions about adult education research has been held at various locations in the United States and Canada. These meetings, which usually attract at least 100 participants, always include a few members of the Commission, but it cannot be said that the Commission are responsible for the continuing existence of the group. If the Commission are concerned with the development and the dissemination of knowledge of adult education, then it would seem desirable, if not essential, that the Commission play a much larger role in the Adult Education Research Conference or else that they establish some other more effective vehicle for the presentation and discussion of research in our field.

The Need for a Basic Text

In 1964, the Commission produced Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study, which was a landmark event in the life of the Commission. While there are those who seem to believe that the Commission was given thalidomide during the gestation of that book, the fact remains that it is the most tangible evidence of efforts to develop a systematic theory of graduate education for professional adult educators. It was an attempt to identify those elements which should be included in the curriculum for preparing professional adult educators. Even if the book had been perfect in 1964, there would undoubtedly be parts which would need to be added to improve its utility in the 1970's and beyond. What responsibility has the Commission for revising or replacing the basic text for our field? If the Commission wish to be seriously regarded as the arbiter of curriculum issues in our

field, then it would seem that they would move immediately to establish a committee to develop the basic text for the field.

The Improvement of Educational Programs

About 12 years ago, the Commission encouraged George Aker to undertake a study of the objectives of graduate work in adult education. That study provided the groundwork for constructing an improved curriculum and for evaluating it. For some reason, the Commission have chosen to decline their role as architects in the design of adult education and training, leaving each of the carpenters to construct their own structures. If the Commission wish to be taken seriously as the intellectual custodians of the field of scholarship, then they cannot remain silent in the areas of curriculum design and evaluation. It is time to designate a committee to move expeditiously in identifying the knowledge, attitudes and skills required for adequate professional preparation of adult education practitioners and in developing and testing methods of achieving these objectives.

One of the initial purposes for creating the Commission was to develop improved methods of graduate education for adult education. Yet, if one looks for research in this area, he finds little new material. Not only are the Commission not demonstrating leadership in improving methods of graduate study, but also they have apparently been silent and uninvolved in the international awakening to the importance of lifelong learning.

The Invisible Professional Association

When Unesco established a Commission on the Development of Education to examine the world of education throughout life both now and in the future, that Commission sought advice from scores of persons regarding adult education, but it did not seek assistance from the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education. The Unesco Commission's report makes no reference to our Commission.[1]

When the Unesco Institute for Education set up an exploratory study on school curriculum, structures and teacher education in the perspective of lifelong education, the Commission was not consulted. The report of that study does not mention our Commission despite the fact that many of us might like to believe that our Commission would have been

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[1] Edgar Faure et al., Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow (Paris: Unesco, London: Harrap, 1972).

among the first groups consulted.[1] Our prestige is somewhat limited.

The qualifications for membership in the Commission have been debated periodically by persons both inside and outside of the Commission for at least 14 years. The number of members is at least 10 times larger than it was in 1957, even though the preoccupation with full-time graduate degree program affiliation excludes both part-time professors in graduate programs and full and part-time professors in undergraduate programs in adult education. With the proliferation of teaching positions in adult education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, there is a need to induct new professors of adult education into the Commission, lest they be attracted to some other association or start one of their own. If the Commission are to survive and maintain a claim to the academic leadership of the adult education field, they must be prepared to welcome and to socialize both the part-time and the undergraduate professors of adult education. The Chairman of the Commission should instruct the membership committee to convene today to develop a recommendation on full or associate membership for professors of adult education who have heretofore been excluded from membership. This recommendation should be presented at our business meeting this afternoon.

The Challenge of Maintaining Standards

Almost without exception, one of the vital functions which professional associations are expected to perform is that of maintaining standards. We in adult education have often found it difficult to make judgments and to criticize, because we do not like to say negative things about our sponsors or about our colleagues' programs. I believe that the dependence of the A^3E on the Carnegie Corporation and the dependence of the AEA on the Fund for Adult Education deflected both of these associations from addressing problems of the entire field, because their sponsors were interested in only a sector of it. Since the U.S. Office of Education is now a patron of adult basic education and the primary source of external funding for a number of our graduate programs, some of us would feel a bit uneasy if the Commission were to challenge actions of the Office of Education. What statement did the Commission make regarding the appointment of the United States delegation to Unesco's third world conference on adult education in 1972? Have the Commission evaluated and released their conclusions regarding the composition of the advisory boards which have been set up to suggest policy on

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[1] R. H. Dave, Lifelong Education and School Curriculum, UIE monographs No. 1 (Hamburg: Unesco Institute for Education, 1973).

federal involvement in adult education? Can the Commission appraise the legitimacy of government decisions such as the choice of an institution to serve as the host for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Education? Can we expect to be taken seriously as the preeminent scholarly body in the field if we take no public position on decisions and actions which have serious implications for research and training in adult education?

Within the past seven years, the Office of Education has awarded dozens of contracts for staff development projects in adult basic education and several contracts to provide consultation to institutions of higher education which were considering establishing degree programs for the training of adult educators. Let us think back to 1966 and recall the awarding of teacher training contracts to organizations with no history of involvement in adult education while other institutions which had been struggling along for years trying to maintain an adult education degree program were bypassed. If our Commission had been the acknowledged voice of academic expertise in adult education, they should have expressed their opinion clearly, publicly and influentially. Yet the Commission were unprepared to consider themselves the watchdogs of the standards of adult education training and exerted little influence on the Office of Education.

It should be remembered that the Office of Education supported a conference at George Washington University on accelerating the training of adult educators. Each university with a graduate adult education program was invited to send one professor, so the Commission were adequately represented. Unfortunately, the Commission did not seize this opportunity to demonstrate their leadership in academic adult education.

If the Commission of the Professors are to become the voice of the professors of adult education and the guardian of the standards of adult education training, we must both speak with authority and address ourselves to major problems. While the Commission should be able to anticipate many training needs and propose plans for meeting them, some training needs cannot be anticipated. If the Commission wish to be taken seriously by those officials who do have the luxury of being able to postpone taking action, the Commission must be prepared to respond to unanticipated training needs promptly. Otherwise, the initiative for adult education training will remain with some other group.

Other professions develop means of maintaining standards through the use of certification, accreditation and licensing procedures. I realize that there are within the Commission sincere, dedicated individuals who are constitutionally opposed to the use of rules or any other devices for insuring even a

minimal degree of uniformity in training programs for adult educators. Nevertheless, if the majority of members of the Commission endorses the opinion that we are unable or at least unwilling to recognize or assess the quality of a training program for preparing adult educators, who can be expected to recognize any other claim we might make of expertise or special competence in our field?

Have the Commission any responsibility to review the establishment, maintaining and curtailing of training programs for adult educators? Should we sit by and say nothing when institutions establish programs? Should there be no minimal standards? Should we sit quietly when an institution permits the number of students to rise markedly without making a corresponding increase in the number of faculty members? Are we prepared to gather data on each institution which seeks to establish a program to ascertain whether adequate resources are being made available? Are we prepared to investigate the situation when the continued existence of any program is threatened? And then are we willing to share the facts in each case with all interested parties? Are we prepared to pay the price in time, money and emotional strain required to perform the role of guardian of standards of adult education training? Unless we are prepared to do all that is needed to maintain standards, then probably we should not aspire to become a professional society of adult education professors.

The Advising of Prospective Students

The last function I want to mention is that of providing assistance to the prospective student in an adult education program. In a few weeks, the National Center for Educational Statistics will be publishing a directory of degree programs in the United States for the preparation of professional adult educators. This publication contains limited quantitative data on institutions with degree programs in adult education which responded to a mailed questionnaire in 1971. Although this directory may be imperfect and dated, it provides a prospective student with more information about study opportunities than has been available in one publication previously. Only a committee of the Commission would be a competent body to discriminate among programs and to assign qualitative ratings to them. The publication by the Commission of a guide to degree training opportunities in adult education would be of great interest and value to prospective students and could also serve to insure that certain minimal standards would be satisfied.

In Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to show that adult education is not at present a profession. I have tried to argue that the Commission should address themselves to the objectives they were originally established to pursue rather than seeking to become the professional association for all graduates of university degree programs in adult education. I have identified a set of criteria which can be used to assess the extent to which adult education can be shown to be moving toward professional status. Finally, I have sought to describe several of the challenges which must be considered as we explore future functional roles of the Commission of the Professors of Adult Education as a professional group.